

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please amend claims 1, 6, 8, 17-18, 22, 24 and 26, as follows:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A large-waterplane-area ship, comprising:
a hull structure having a plurality of exclusive hull portions protruding from a main body of the hull structure, each hull portion having a length shorter than the length of the main body and each hull portion comprising a buoyant portion having a buoyancy wherein the combined buoyancy of each hull portion is sufficient to support the main body above a waterline, and wherein each of the ~~hull~~ buoyant portions is at least partially above the waterline during operation of the ship.
2. (Original) The ship of claim 1 wherein the plurality of hull portions comprise a triangular pattern.
3. (Original) The ship of claim 1 wherein the plurality of hull portions comprise a quadrangular pattern.
4. (Original) The ship of claim 1 wherein the plurality of hull portions comprise a octangular pattern.
5. (Original) The ship of claim 1 wherein each of the plurality of exclusive hull portions each has a Froude number greater than approximately 0.8 during a cruising mode of operation of the ship.
6. (Currently Amended) A large-waterplane-area ship, comprising:
a hull structure having a plurality of exclusive hull portions protruding from a main body of the hull structure, each hull portion having a Froude number greater than approximately 0.8 during a cruising mode of operation of the ship, each hull portion being comprising a buoyant portion at least partially above a waterline during the cruising mode of operation.

7. (Previously Presented) The ship of claim 6 wherein each of hull portions has a length, and wherein the length of the largest hull portion is less than a length of the main body.

8. (Currently Amended) A large-waterplane-area ship, comprising:
a hull structure having a plurality of exclusive hull portions protruding from
a main body of the hull structure, each hull portion having a Froude number greater than
approximately 0.8 during a cruising mode of operation of the ship, each hull portion
being at least partially above a waterline during the cruising mode of operation. ~~The ship~~
~~of claim 6~~ wherein each hull portion has a length different from the length of any other hull portion.

9. (Previously Presented) A ship, comprising:
a main body having a length;
a plurality of struts protruding from the main body; and
a plurality of pontoons each coupled to at least one of the plurality of struts, each pontoon being misaligned with the other pontoons along the length, each pontoon having a length shorter than the length of the main body and each pontoon having a buoyancy wherein the combined buoyancy of each pontoon is sufficient to support the main body above a waterline, and wherein each pontoon has a Froude number greater than approximately 0.8 during a cruising mode of operation of the ship.

10. (Previously Presented) The ship of claim 9 wherein the combined buoyancy of each pontoon is sufficient to support the struts above the water line.

11. (Original) The ship of claim 9 wherein each strut is attached to one and only one pontoon.

12. (Original) The ship of claim 11 wherein the length of each pontoon is longer than the length of its attached strut.

13. (Original) The ship of claim 9 wherein each strut is attached to a plurality of pontoons.

14. (Original) The ship of claim 9 wherein the combined buoyancy of the pontoons is adjustable to a level such that the ship operates at one of a plurality of operating modes.

15. (Original) The ship of claim 14 wherein the level corresponds to a catamaran operating mode.

16. (Original) The ship of claim 14 wherein the level corresponds to a small-waterplane-area twin hull (Swath) operating mode.

17. (Currently Amended) A method of forming a hull for a ship, comprising:
forming a main body having a length; and
directly coupling a plurality of independent buoyant hull portions to the main body, each hull portion having a length that is less than the length of the main body.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of forming a hull for a ship, comprising:
forming a main body having a length; and
directly coupling a plurality of independent hull portions to the main body, each hull portion having a length that is less than the length of the main body. ~~The method of claim 17~~ wherein each hull portion has a different length.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising adjusting a draft of the ship by ballasting one or more of the independent hull portions.

20. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein coupling a plurality of independent hull portions to the main body comprising coupling three independent hull portions to the main body in a triangular pattern.

21. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein coupling a plurality of independent hull portions to the main body comprising coupling four independent hull portions to the main body in a rectangular pattern.

22. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a ship, comprising:
forming a main body having a length;

coupling a plurality of independent hull portions to the main body, each hull portion having a length that is less than the length of the main body; and

powering the boat to a cruising velocity, wherein at the cruising velocity each of the independent hull portions has a Froude number greater than approximately .8, and each of the hull portions ~~is~~ comprises a buoyant portion at least partially above a waterline.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein coupling a plurality of independent hull portions to the main body comprising arranging the hull portions in a predetermined pattern on the main body, the pattern being selected to obtain independent hull characteristics for each hull during powering the boat to a cruising velocity.

24. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a ship, comprising:
forming a main body having a length;
coupling a plurality of independent hull portions to the main body, each
hull portion having a length that is less than the length of the main body; and
powering the boat to a cruising velocity, wherein at the cruising velocity
each of the independent hull portions has a Froude number greater than approximately
.8, and each of the hull portions is at least partially above a waterline. ~~The method of~~
~~claim 22 wherein each hull portion has a different length.~~

25. (Original) The method of claim 22 further comprising adjusting a draft of the ship by ballasting one or more of the independent hull portions.

26. (Currently Amended) A ship having a cruising speed at a Froude number that is greater than 0.5 and comprising a plurality of hull portions protruding from a main body of the ship, ~~and~~ each of the hull portion comprising a buoyant portion at least partially above a waterline at the cruising speed.